

N. Amer. Smith, C.C.  
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## The New Work of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions.

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This work, which the Christian Woman's Board of Missions has assumed, is that which for ten years has been carried on by the Board of Negro Education and Evangelization.

We have mission fields, vast and needy, within the borders of our own country. There is a negro population in our Southern States numbering eight millions. Three-fourths of this population are totally illiterate, and nine-tenths are comparatively so. Only one out of every three can read and write; not one in three hundred has a Normal School training, and not one in a thousand has what may be called a liberal education. In view of these statistics we are not surprised to find their standard of civilization low and their code of morals lax.

It was for work among this people that the Board of Negro Education and Evangelization was organized at our National Convention held in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1890.

The work of the Christian Church among the negroes of the South began much earlier than this; it was first a thought in the mind of Thomas Munnell at the time he was Corresponding Secretary of the American Christian Missionary Convention, and as early as 1873 negotiations were entered into looking toward the establishment of a school for the education of negroes. This school was afterwards known as the Southern Christian Institute.

It was not until 1882 that the present site of the Institute was purchased. In 1881, William Irelan opened a school in Hemingway, Miss. He was the first instructor in this line of our educational work. In 1882 the present site of the Southern Christian Institute, the 800 acres of land and the old "mansion house," known as the Cook plantation, near Edwards, Miss., was purchased, and Randall Faurot took charge of the work. He died in the fall of that same year. The work at the Institute was then taken charge of by Jephthan Hobbs, and he continued in charge until 1890, when J. B. Lehman took the work; he still continues in it.

When the Board of Negro Education and Evangelization was organized for work in the South, this school naturally came under its care, and this Board has since maintained it, and under its guidance it has grown to its present prosperous condition.

This is not the only work undertaken. The Louisville Christian Bible School, at Louisville, Kentucky, was opened in October of 1892; the Lum Graded School, at Lum, Alabama, was opened in October of 1894, and last October a school was opened at Martinsville, Virginia, for the States of Virginia and North Carolina. The Board has carried on evangelistic work in many States.

**THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE.**—This is an institution for the education of negroes. It is situated at Edwards, Mississippi. J. B. Lehman is the President, and there are ten other teachers. This school has four departments, viz.: Literary, Biblical, Musical and Industrial. When a student has finished the Literary Department he is prepared for the freshman class in one of our Northern colleges. In the Musical Department all who

wish can receive instruction in instrumental music, and much attention is given to the drill of the whole school in vocal music, in which they take great delight. All are taught the Bible. The first hour of each day is devoted to devotional exercises and a careful, systematic study of the Word of God. There are special classes for the ministerial student, not only for the study of the Word, but for that which will aid him in preaching the Word.

*Industrial Department.*—There are now in this department fifty young people and at this rate of growth there will soon be a hundred. These young people are learning trades while gaining a literary education. Industrial training is given in farming, gardening, carpentry, factory, in wood work, printing, broom-making, sewing and general housework.

It must be remembered that the work is not simply to *instruct*, in the common use of that term, but rather to *civilize*. Many of the students, though fully grown, actually do not know their right hand from their left, have never sat at a table to eat a meal, or used a knife or fork, but have taken their food, even when cooked, out of the skillet with their hands and sat on a door-step or a log to eat it. They have slept in the clothes in which they toiled all day. To sit down at a table spread with a clean cloth and eat with knife and fork, with a napkin spread before them, and to lie down between clean sheets, is the opening to them of a new era in life. None can come and work a few months and be entirely as they were. A glimpse of a new world has been opened to them. By the labor of these people all the cooking, all the sewing, all the farm and carpenter work is done. Under training they till the land, build buildings, run a planing-mill, print a paper, and cook the food. They thus learn a trade while learning to

“read, write and cipher.” The amount of tact, patience and perseverance it takes to do this work with such helpers can hardly be imagined. The school is well equipped, but is unlike any other educational work. In the primary department, for instance, there are all ages, from little children to middle-aged men and women. In one class we found a little girl and her father. The child was always trying to help the father out in his recitations. It often takes a whole term and sometimes an entire year to get them to use their minds at all. It is almost a hopeless mining after mind. Some of them stay but a short time, and go away with a few new ideas about life, and that is about all. Others remain, and it is simply astonishing to what degree of development some are capable of attaining. There is a charm after all in thus exploring the unknown and undeveloped mind and character. Every teacher there becomes fascinated with the work. It is in the highest degree Christ-like and missionary.

Most of the students work for their education. They come to the school miserably clad and ignorant, with no friends to help them. They sign a contract to labor a year, receive for their work food and lodging, and are allowed \$20 a year for clothing and incidentals. Their clothing comes from the second-hand clothes sent by the good people from all over our land, and costs them but little. The second year they go into the class-room, but during the first year they have learned many things helpful. The second year they must all labor one hour a day. The chore work is done in this way. The third year they work again, and so on until their education is complete. This is slow but sure. One class is sent to the woods to cut poles for firewood, a second to the fields to plow (they were in the midst of plowing when I was there in January), some to the

mill to saw wood and to use the planer, some to the printing department, some to the laundry, and some to the kitchen.

We have, from the beginning, expended at the Southern Christian Institute about \$30,000 outside of the money paid for the plantation. The buildings alone, which have been added, would cost, if built by contract, much more than this. We have all the machinery, implements and stock beside. When the two buildings, now contemplated, are finished and furnished, the whole plant will have cost, outside of what we have raised from the plantation and school, just about \$35,000. This includes all we have expended for the running expenses as well as all permanent improvements. This plant, so equipped and stocked, will be worth at least \$50,000. The land could not be purchased, and the buildings built by contract, for that amount. In other words, every dollar expended in that work remains in permanent improvements. All the money we have expended for teachers and supplies has come back in the labor of those whom we have blessed, and all remains as a permanent endowment for that work. You may search the south-land over, and not find any use of the "Lord's money" which has brought equal returns; and when the work we now have on hand is completed, we can confidently ask our friends from all over the land to come and see not only the beauty of the campus, but also what we have been enabled to accomplish with such slender means. The good white people, in all that section, are proud of the school and what it has wrought for the uplifting of a race.

The plantation on which the school is located contains 800 acres of land. There are now, for all departments, the following buildings: The old plantation mansion, to which was added a

girls' dormitory and a dining-room. The old school building, which now serves as a planing-mill, printing office and boys' dormitory. A barn, laundry and cotton sheds, and the new college building, containing chapel and library, class-rooms and offices. The new building (Allison Hall) is well on its way toward completion. This building contains, on the first floor, the large dining-room, a kitchen, bake-room, etc., and rooms for the family that will have the charge of the building; the second floor is arranged for the girls' dormitory. This building will be heated with a first-class furnace; while this adds to the cost of the building it will save in the expense of furnishing and of fuel, besides greatly diminishing danger from fire. This hall would have been completed by this time but that last summer the class in carpentry had to be taken from the building to assist the class in agriculture in saving the cotton crop, which was threatened with failure on account of protracted wet weather. The building, when completed, will have cost about \$2,200. It could not be built by contract for less than \$8,000.

Heretofore we have only paid cash for materials for the buildings, all the labor being performed by students; now, however, we are compelled to employ a good mechanic to superintend the work and train the class. This was formerly done by J. B. Lehman, the President, but now, on account of the growth of the school, his duties have so accumulated that it is impossible for him longer to do this work. We now have, in J. O. Baker, a first-class man for this work, and he has a good class under him.

Last year we undertook to raise enough money to erect all the buildings necessary to fully provide for the school for some time, viz.: girls' dormitory, boys' dormitory and hospital.

We only secured enough to erect the one building, and the special work for the coming year will be to raise funds for the completion of the other two. They will both cost about the same as the building now being erected. The completion of these two buildings, the salary of superintendent, and other improvements will require about \$3,000.

The Christian Woman's Board of Missions, on account of the greatly enlarged work of this year, have asked the writer to raise this fund. If it is not raised we must stop our building operations, and this will retard the growth of the school; the class in carpentry will have to be disbanded and the superintendent discharged. We are confident, however, that this sum will be raised. One man has already pledged \$500 of this amount. The friends of this cause will rally to the support of this undertaking and enable us to fully equip this magnificent plant for carrying on the Lord's work. When these buildings are all erected the plant will be worth at least \$50,000. It would be impossible for us to invest \$50,000 in any other way to bring like returns, in cash, for the support of the school, and yet all this time we have been building up this great industrial institution, we have been training hundreds for their life work of leading their people to better things.

**THE LOUISVILLE CHRISTIAN BIBLE SCHOOL.**  
—This school was opened Tuesday, October 11, 1892. It is situated at Louisville, Ky. A. J. Thomson is principal, Octavius Singleton assistant. In this school it is designed to afford just such help as young colored men, who desire to labor for the elevation and salvation of their race, most need to fit them for this work. In three things it differs somewhat from most theological schools. First, in limiting instruction to the English language. Second, in ex-

tending its advantages to those who, on account of lack of attainments in other things, could not secure like advantages in most theological schools. Third, in the degree to which it makes all studies, severally and collectively, subordinate to the study of the Bible. Many preachers and teachers and workers along various lines have already gone out from this school.

From the time of the opening of this institution until the following January the school was held in the lecture-room of the Hancock Street Christian Church. Then it was moved to more commodious quarters at 1820-22 Duncan street. Here it continued until the opening of the third annual session, Tuesday, Sept. 11, 1894. This session was at 704 Kentucky street. The session of 1895-96 found the school again at the Duncan street place, and there it remains to this day. Before the organization of the Board of Negro Education and Evangelization there had been a school at New Castle, Ky. The property purchased for this school was sold in 1892 for \$2,500; this sum was placed to the credit of the Board of Negro Education and Evangelization for the purchase of a home for the Louisville Bible School. To this fund the Board has added special gifts and interest until, at the last report, there was \$4,583.47 on hand. In November, 1900, the property on Duncan street, formerly rented for the school, was purchased for \$3,140; the balance left in the fund will be ample to thoroughly refit and furnish the building so it will be a suitable permanent home for the school.

**THE LUM GRADED SCHOOL.**—October 15, 1894, Robert Brooks (educated at the Southern Christian Institute) opened a school in a miserable shanty near Lum, Alabama, with forty pupils enrolled. The school having this humble origin is now known to us and through all



the section of country where it is located as the "Lum Graded School."

The next year Daniel Mercer, of Bowling Green, Ohio, gave \$100 to buy material for a new school building, and with this and what the negroes of that section could raise, they erected a school building, and in this building a school, with an enrollment of over one hundred pupils, has been conducted each year since. This school building is erected on land donated for the purpose by a white woman. The Board of Negro Education and Evangelization aided them in finishing and equipping the building, and has, from the beginning, fostered and financially aided this work. Two years ago it purchased for this school 20 acres of land (on which is a good cabin) adjoining that already owned. This land will form the basis for an industrial department. The school has three grades—the primary, the intermediate and the normal—and last year enrolled 130 pupils. It would be hard to estimate the good that this school has done in all that part of the South.

**THE MARTINSVILLE SCHOOL.**—For several years we have had the establishment of educational work in Southwestern Virginia for the States of Virginia and North Carolina, under advisement. The colored people of that section have been calling for it. They have themselves raised \$224 and sent us for that purpose. This fall the school was opened in the church at Martinsville, Virginia, under the leadership of J. H. Thomas; thirty-four pupils enrolled. It is entirely self-sustaining. The colored people have organized for the purpose of raising funds for the purchase of land and the erection of buildings. W. H. Book, pastor of the church at Martinsville, says it is the finest opening for work among the colored people, for the Christian Church, in the whole South.

We have given the larger part of the space in this circular to the Southern Christian Institute, not that all the schools are not worthy of fuller mention, but our building enterprises, this year, are there, and this work is, to a degree, a type of all the rest.

Now that these enterprises have been taken charge of by the Christian Woman's Board of Missions, we predict for them the same sympathetic care, the same wise oversight, the same thorough investigation, which has characterized the Christian Woman's Board of Missions in its dealings with all its missionary enterprises.

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